



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, ARTS AND LIBRARIES
LANSING

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SHPO UPDATE

STATE TAX CREDIT PROGRAM: INFORMATION SHEET NO. 3

Photographing your Historic Resource for the Michigan Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program

What kind of photographs should you take to document your historic resource for your tax credit application? The purpose of this information sheet is to describe the best way to accurately and completely photo document your resource.

The preferred format for photographs is 35mm color film, 3 x 5 or 4 x 6 prints. Polaroid film and prints are acceptable but not as desirable. Digital or scanned photographs may also be acceptable if they are of high quality and provide sufficient information for our review. If your photo documentation is not complete or of poor quality, we will request additional photographs of the resource.

It is not necessary to assemble your photographs in a binder or photo sleeves. However, the photographs submitted should clearly be numbered and labeled on the back. The photos should also be keyed to a floor plan so that the location of the photo is clear (See Figure 1).

A few well planned photographs can often more completely and accurately describe your resource than a whole roll of quick snapshots. The number of photographs submitted for each application varies based on the size of the resource and level of detail and ornamentation. The information provided here will be broken down to correspond with each part of the three part application, and will include exterior photography, and interior photography.

PHOTOGRAPHS SUBMITTED WITH THE PART 1 APPLICATION

EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

There are four essential photographs that should accompany each application for each structure. The **first photo** should be a perspective showing the front and one side of the building, taken from a position 45 degrees from the front (See Photo 1). Every component of the building should be in full view including the foundation and roof peaks and chimneys. The **second photo** should show a full front elevation (See Photo 2). This should be taken by standing directly at the center point of the structure, and again include the whole building. A **third photo** should be a perspective taken from a position at 45

degrees and should show the rear of the structure and the side elevation not shown in the front perspective photo (See Photo 3). The **fourth photo** should be taken from across the street at 45 degrees and should include your resource and one or two on either side in order to give a clear indication of the context of your resource (See Photo 4).

INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Interior photographs accompanying the Part 1 application are general, overall photographs of the primary interior spaces and features. The photographs should be taken in a sequence starting with the front entry area, and moving through the primary spaces toward the more private spaces. For example, one photo of the entry foyer showing the front door and staircase, one photo showing the living room with fireplace, a photo of the dining room including window trim and wainscot (See Photo 5), and a photo of the kitchen showing the back door and kitchen cabinets. Likewise, similar photographs of the interior spaces in the second floor should be included.

PHOTOGRAPHS SUBMITTED WITH THE PART 2 APPLICATION

EXTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs for the Part 2 application should not duplicate those for the Part 1, but should be closer views of building components or elements that are included in the project. Detailed photos of building elements should be included to fully demonstrate existing conditions. For example, deteriorated wood porch railings or windows proposed for repair should be shown and should clearly show the deteriorated areas (See Photo 6).

INTERIOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Likewise, the proposed work on the interior should clearly show areas of work and details of the project work areas. To fully document one room, two photographs should be taken from opposite corners of the room. Detailed photos of work on a specific item such as a fireplace mantel or staircase should also be included (See Photo 7).

PHOTOGRAPHS SUBMITTED WITH THE PART 3 APPLICATION

The photos submitted with the Part 3 application should directly correspond to those taken in the Part 1 and Part 2 applications. They should show the same views and areas of work, and clearly demonstrate the **completed** work.

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY TIPS

- When photographing your historic resource, try to avoid backlighting of the subject. Try to take photographs with the sun at your back, rather than facing the sun. In

addition, cloudy or overcast days provide the best overall, even light for photographing your resource. This approach will help to avoid extreme shadows on the building and will assist in clearly showing building details.

- The above guidelines for exterior photography should also be applied to garages or any other outbuildings on the property. Photographs of all contributing and non-contributing structures on the property should be included with the Part 1 application. Any historically significant landscape features should also be documented through photographs for the Part 1.
- If you have historic photographs of your resource, or have access to a historic photograph, a black and white photocopy submitted with your application can be useful as an additional documentation.
- Finally, we would suggest that you get double prints when your film is processed. You should retain one copy so that your photographs submitted with the Part 3 application can correspond with the location of the Part 2 photographs.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Athearn, Frederic J. *National Register Bulletin 23: How to Improve the Quality of Photographs for National Register Nominations*. National Park Service, 1979, 1987, 1996.

Ames, David L. *A Primer on Architectural Photography and the Photo Documentation of Historic Structures*. University of Delaware.



PHOTO 1

45 degree perspective view showing front and side.



PHOTO 2

Full front elevation view of resource.



PHOTO 3

45 degree perspective view of rear and side of resource



PHOTO 4

Resource in the context of adjacent structures.



PHOTO 5

View from living room into dining room showing window trim and wainscot.



PHOTO 6

Detailed view of window showing existing condition.



PHOTO 7

Detail view of fireplace.